

**NWIFCA Technical, Science and Byelaw
Sub-Committee**

11 December 2012: 2.00.p.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.**

8

UPDATE ON THE RAZOR CLAM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FISHERY

Recommendation

Report to be received

Update

1. Following the start of the Literature Review surrounding clam and razor clam dredging a meeting was held at the Carnforth Office on 31st August 2012. The meeting was attended by operators, Natural England and Science Working Group Members.
2. Proposed at the meeting was to review the use of electrical towed gear in the collection of razor clams within the Irish Sea as a less detrimental gear type to benthic fauna. Officers collated information on this gear type and previous trials using similar gear or other fisheries where electrical gear is deployed for the collection of fish. The MMO were also with regards to dispensation for the use of electrical gear as it is currently banned under EU legislation.
3. A further meeting was held on 4th October 2012 to provide information from the action points arising from initial meeting and how to proceed with the project development. Officers informed attendees that there was no guarantee that the MMO would be able to provide dispensation for the trials and a full dispensation application would have to be submitted for processing before any answer could be given. Attendees of this meeting decided to proceed with the development of a methodology for trial using electrical gear and to submit a dispensation request to the MMO. Operators would follow up on lines of enquiry with CEFAS and NFFO to look at funding or collaborative working for the project.
4. A methodology has been drawn up which will seek to collect various types of data to help inform the fishery and its impacts, including population data and well as monitoring fished areas for recovery and habitat changes post fishing activity. This will be circulated to members and operators for comment. A final draft of the Literature Review surrounding this project will be also made available via the Knowledge Hub Group.
5. Once agreement has been reached on the methodology and gear type, a dispensation request will be completed and sent to the MMO for consideration. Should the dispensation be granted the trials will aim to commence in spring 2013. This will allow time for operators to work with local authorities to get the area classified for Shellfish Hygiene purposes which takes a minimum of 3 months.

**Scientific Officer
November 2012**